

James City Green Building Design Roundtable

Monday, September 14, 2009

Government Complex Building F Board of Supervisors Room

3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Roundtable Committee Members

Private Sector

Jack Van Kniest, Van Kniest
Andrew Cronan, Guernsey Tingle Architects
Suzy Cheely, Busch Gardens
Kevin Willis, MBP
Tim Isom, Wal-Mart Distribution Center 6088

Public Sector

James Kennedy, JCC Board of Supervisors
Steven Hicks, JCC Development Management
Rick Hanson, JCC Office of Housing & Community Development
Cheryl Waldren, JCC Development Management
Tom Coghill, JCC Code Compliance
Steven Yarovsky, JCC Economic Development
Ellen Cook, JCC Development Management
Scott Whyte, JCC Development Management
Rich Krapf, JCC Planning Commission
Bernard Farmer, JCC General Services
Jennifer Private, JCC General Services
Michael Vergakis, JCSA
Scott Thomas, JCC Environmental Services

General Discussion

Steven opened the meeting with the discussion of the minutes and the website.

Cheryl replied about the James City Green Building Design Roundtable (JBDR) website. There are some ideas about what the site may look like as well as the Communications committee has some ideas, however until the JBDR makes a decision about the contents of the website and what they want to communicate to the target audience. We are waiting for the committee's direction.

Steven asked Jennifer about the JCC General Services website. The General Services website has a wealth of information and County Administration would like to have one website that can capture what is being done in James City County on sustainability.

Jennifer went on to explain that is the direction the committee is going and is working with Rob Vance, (Web Designer) and it will be a County page, and a Green Community page which will have all the same features as other county WebPages. All the information from the entire department will be in one location as a “one stop shop”.

Andy asked will the information be under the www.jccgov.com website.

Jennifer said that it would.

Steven mentioned once the website is complete a News Release will be issued to the public and get familiar with the website.

Jack Kniest mentioned part of the review process should be for another committee to review the web page and make sure it's understandable for public use.

Andrew asked about the guest speaker, Cynthia Adams, from the City of Charlottesville. Ms. Adams is at the fore front for sustainability in the Charlottesville area. She was not able to do a presentation however; we may be able to interact with her in a different way. She is available to consult with us about ideas we are thinking about and answer any questions we may have. Charlottesville has an Energy Star Program which she is the lead on.

Scott asked about a webinar since it may be cheaper to communicate with her?

Andrew said this was a possible option, and mentioned the Energy Star Program has a huge impact and is worth looking at possibly pursuing.

Jim asked, if Cynthia Adams will be available for the Charlottesville field trip?

Steven went on to explain that Jim has coordinated a meeting with some officials in the Charlottesville area to discuss and review how their developments are practicing sustainability.

Steven discussed the Sustainable Summit/fair – outreach/educational program is there still any interest or wait?

Andy mentioned the committee needs to decide in which direction we are going and he has some ideas from his report. If there should be a decision to pursue some items then we should considered what to map out and what makes sense to do and what will have the biggest impact.

Tim Isom mentioned some presentations from a couple of groups who are interested, such as New Kent, West Point and also reviewing building structures, service and government building structures. How are they more sustainable in the community?

Steven mentioned Wal-Mart and how they are taking the lead on sustainability and also have an energy efficiency program. Hopefully they can do a presentation, which Tim can do for the committee.

Rich Krapf gave the committee an overview of the James City County Sustainable Plan which was proposed as part of the JCC Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission is currently still going thru some work sessions on the Comp Plan and during one of those work sessions Jack Fraley had advocated the idea of preparing a County Sustainability Plan, but the commission felt that may be redundant to what is already in the goals, strategies and actions. Attached with the JBDR packet is the County Sustainability Plan proposal and it is interesting that a lot of the elements in the Comp Plan are also being addressed by the Green Building Roundtable group such as Earthcraft certification for houses. The Sustainability Plan was more of an information document.

Steven mentioned that once the Planning Commission began its update of the draft plan there was more emphasis on sustainability based on the input done for the Comp Plan. The question is do we need to review this plan when the same information is in Comp Plan which talks about sustainability for James City County.

Rich responded back that Mr. Fraley did not need the Roundtable Committee to respond back about the County Sustainability. The County Sustainability Plan may be a good document for any future actions or the report that comes from the Roundtable group, but the document does not need to be inserted into the Comprehensive Plan.

Ellen Cook mentioned that Mr. Fraley thought that a Sustainability Plan might be something that a group like JBDR might specifically consider creating.

Steven mentioned that the goals, strategies and actions are in line with what the Roundtable is doing as the committee. Our goal is to have some guidelines that the Board of Supervisors can and/or will endorse or provide more guidance to the County Administrator as to the specifics of the Plan. The report has an outline for recommendations if the BOS looks thru the report and may have some guidance on what the County should focus on. The policy committee process should develop some policies which will have some guidelines that the County and the development committee could follow. The guidelines should be very clear for the development community on certain types of development and what our expectations are. Although the County has a variety of different standards now that are in place and those guidelines could relate to certain proffers, to certain type of requirements for sustainability. Not only that but that we already have certain types of ordinances and requirements that the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors will be revisiting to determine should we amend certain policies or ordinances to have a little more teeth in it or should we move forward with what we have and use the plan to negotiate with the developer on cases that are not by-right.

Scott stated that most of the information seems to be integrated for a draft report packet.

Steven mentioned some of the GSA's that come from the Comp Plan would be a good working document to report.

Rich agreed the document does reinforce some of the actions items that are mentioned throughout the plan.

Steven's concern is this all new information. Are there any comments on the Draft JCC Green Building Design Roundtable Report?

Andy mentioned since the Comp Plan is focusing on development and new construction, which is one piece of the pie; there are other pieces of the pie that are important. We also must give a careful thought on who our audience will be to present this draft to.

Steven Yarvosky mentioned the report was very technical and part of the report watered down. The report is not an easy read we must have or find who the target audience is to present this draft. Some of the language does not explain the contents on the draft.

Steven replied the focus was to have each committee compile their information. As a group we can fix the draft to meet the criteria and for the report that will outline in general how James City County is promoting best practices for green building and sustainability. The goal is to have a sustainability policy on public facilities (which the comp plan addresses) to working with the developer who may understand that building homes in the county we may want to have as LEED certified. The audience will be those who are familiar with this kind of practice and we will also have to make sure that the language is understandable for this concept. The goal is to have a clear standard or policy for green design or sustainability. The report will be technical.

Kevin Willis stated the Design Committee focused on who are the different people for the report. Residential is so different from commercial and industrial. So when an individual goes thru the report we are trying to make it easier for the resident.

Steven Yarvorsky stated that as he was reading the draft report he was trying to figure out who the audience is and each audience group is going to have a different message based on their understanding of the report. The communication would be different in how you speak with a resident, and of course a builder is completely different than how one would speak to a Board of Supervisor.

Scott replied the communication subcommittee would fine tune out our approach and there would be enough information on the webpage to have different links for the more technical information.

Steven replied this report is what all of us decided it is going to be. Mr. Kennedy spoke with me last year about this and he did not want the report to be a technical report. We expect the private sector to become involved in this line of work with green building to become more involved and to make comments on what they think this report should be too. We will have a report to help us move forward; however we do need to get the builders involved too. The

purpose of this group is to involve the private sector to have a discussion or add some dialogue on what they would like to see to be incorporated in the report.

Mr. Kennedy mentioned the private sector wants to know what the terms for engagement are. What does it take to engage to build in JCC, what are you looking for. As discussing “green” whether you are speaking environmental standards are whatever you want to say. It all goes back to interpretation and what I envisioned was to have a clear cut choice what is it we would like to be and where we would like to go when it comes down to green design, energy efficiency, retrofitting, reuse, and the home builders association and Robert Duckett. Robert came to talk about what he could be supportive of when it comes to government regulations, or who we use to see it that it obviously takes place. One of the issues that I have with this is reaching out to other jurisdictions talking with Charlottesville, it shows that JCC is serious and the County is in the forefront of most designs when it comes down to environmental standards and being more energy efficient. I view it as being a packet such as being stormwater, as being reuse, energy savings, and building designs. JCC is leading others in being a good steward of the environment and I want us to continue to be in there and to move forward. The County can do that and still be good stewards of the environment and promote good business practices as well. I believe the County can do this and still work towards something that is sustainable and something that is workable.

Andy talked about coming up with information for the residences on things they can do to improve their home and any resources they use for their homes. The second part is “where are we going and what’s our goal? What do we want to impact?” He mentioned what Jim discussed about a sustainable community. If it’s to reduce the energy use and a study is being done that may establish a baseline so we may know what we are measuring. What is our goal in reduction in energy, water usage possibly identifying what we are trying to accomplish. How should we get there? It could be a combination of things such as developmental issues and the private sector as well. It requires us to go back and find ways to impact our current building infrastructure. There has to be two different things: our informational side and what are the initiatives going for?

Steven mentioned the James City County Green Roundtable Draft document is a good document. If a commercial builder wants to build in the County, such as a rezoning they will need to think green. Since JCC are leaders in sustainability there needs to be a trade-off too such as some type of incentives, there needs to some type of reasons and values for a return on the investment why they really need to do it other than the Planners saying, “it is has some public benefits to the community”, and it does but I also want to make sure we are not just piece meal certain type of developments. Such as when a developer submits a master plan and the developer is willing to consider a green type of development, but does that mean they will have to do the other requirements such as proffers, or if they volunteer that information or volunteer to do some of the work. What does that mean to the County and over time does that become the norm. When it becomes the norm then what other type of expectations are we going to request of the developer. As the County looks for ways to reuse, recycle, waste treatment and how the County operates, but I will tell you where it will have the most interest when we begin to deal with the development community on how they like to see this report. Hopefully, the report will be laid out very clearly such as if the developer does this is what the County would like.

Scott Whyte mentioned what the development community considers the “best low-hanging fruit”? What incentives would best act as an enticing tool, which ones would be the most doable? Start with those low-hanging fruit without over whelming everybody with too many details. Developing a priority list maybe an option.

Mr. Kennedy stated his expectations as we are moving forward is he will have a different set of standards and expectations as Steven just said. This goes for housing and I’m not looking for 10 or 20 percent I’m looking for compliance across the board and we do not need to go back with anything new in retrofit later. What are our expectations? This is the best management practice that we can possibly do and work together with. I feel it is important to work with other communities such as Charlottesville that have gone thru and have done this work. We do not need to reinvent the wheel with a lot of staff time. Charlottesville is doing something that is working fairly well and we need to look at that. We also need to look at implantation across the board such as our ordinances; we also will look at the Comp Plan when it’s done. We must decide on what we want done and what we must do. There are also inducements to improve and correct where we are now in some other areas. Now certainly in this economy that gets a little tricky. There could be federal and state funds available which we need to capitalize on the funds to the fullest extent. James City County needs to be a leader and forge the way to bring those dollars here. When people talk about JCC environmental standards and how is JCC able to do X, Y, or Z because they are faced with having to do it now where JCC took a pro-active stance and did it before it became a problem and before it was regarded to be done. These management practices can certainly help us in these areas.

Each of the subcommittees then summarized their documentations:

Finance Committee: The committee highlighted the attachments one and two for residential situations and for commercial building owners items we came up with as incentives for retrofitting. The focus was on retrofitting on the development side of new construction this information is already being addressed by codes. The standards have continued to rise and the big deltas from building stock now and getting to up where it is now because that’s where the gains can be made for savings and we tried to focus on those items. Pages 19-21 of the draft report has some recommendations for a possible road map and where we currently. We are trying to identify some steps going forward which would help, and would impact out current building stock. Charlottesville is a great resource for incentives. They have received funds for training for the local contractors to do energy audits and to retrofit homes. They are doing it thru Energy Star which is a program that operates thru the Government which trains local businesses and the State has tax incentives for development. Once we know what the initiatives maybe for incentives that will then be included.

Jack asked is the County capable of implanting a tax base for Green property? Does that not affect revenue?

Andy answered back Communities have put caps on green tax credits such as the state of Florida which are doing that on a wide range of things such as solar energy and wind power. There may be some bonds capabilities where people can retrofit their houses and pay off the

expense thru their water or sewer bill. There are ways to pay off the bond and without the city tax.

Jack stated it is difficult trying to communicate all these programs about tax credits for the residents. He mentioned his frustrations over stimulus funds and it seems to be “what if’s”. Who can follow this and why would someone engage in this program when you’re not sure about the time line and not sure about the budgeting. How does the back pay come, what form or how long does it take a tax credit and how do I figure out a tax credit?

Andy responded back he would suggest doing some pilot projects that could lay out how it is to be done but it may take more of a commitment from the County to create something like Charlottesville has done.

Housing Subcommittee:

Rick summarized for the Housing subcommittee and mentioned the existing buildings are a great potential for reducing resource usage. There are some things that are being done already in that area and should continue. Incrementally we should do additional steps on some of the projects that the County may be involved in as a pilot project. The existing buildings are a very important factor.

Design and Construction Subcommittee:

This group focused on looking at sustainable development and looked at what other localities are doing. The group is coming up with a list of recommendations, for example LEED.

Communication Subcommittee:

The group examined who and what our target audience is and how we should reach those particular audiences. The challenge for the forum is to determine what the message is for those audiences. We are looking at websites as a form of communication and looking at other communities with websites for sustainability. So we have some resources, but the challenge for this group is to know what exactly the message is for communicating to the different audiences, for example county employees for an educational tool to share with the community and residential, business sector and elementary children. So to identify our target audiences, is the challenge.

Steven mentioned there is a lot of information and as we move forward it is clear our audience is very broad. As the meetings move forward we will have something that will compliment the Comprehensive Plan and a decent product by the time it goes to the Board of Supervisor it will be very clear who the audience is.

Bernie mentioned he has been working with a committee of staff on a County policy for Sustainable Design on County owned and leased buildings and we have a draft of that. I would like to know if it would be appropriate to circulate the document to the Design subcommittee

before we take this to executive staff and then to the Board for a purposed document. We would like for the committee to review.

Steven mentioned the group participation and will send an e-mail to find out who is still committed to the committee. The committee will have 4 to 6 months for the final project. October 5th is the next meeting.